



## AKWAABA ANNUAL REPORT

Reporting Period: April 2020 - March 2021

Charity Registration Number: 1181291

### PART 1: ABOUT AKWAABA



Akwaaba is a Hackney-based social centre for migrants. We offer a space for rest, play, learning and mutual support. Akwaaba is for all migrants regardless of immigration status, 'race', religion, country of origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and (dis)ability.

We believe that no-one is illegal. We are committed to actively opposing racism and all other forms of discrimination and oppression.

Our aim is to build community and foster care, cooperation and solidarity. As a community, we try

to make decisions collectively and give all members an equal say in how the social centre is run. Akwaaba is a volunteer-run space.

Our primary aims are to:

- Offer a safe and welcoming space for migrants of all backgrounds for social activities and mutual support
- Foster solidarity and build a shared community of people from different backgrounds
- Provide material support including food, travel bursaries and other donated items to migrant members experiencing hardship

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## Summary of changes to Akwaaba's activities between April 2020 to March 2020

Akwaaba's activities were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic as we adapted to respond to the current situation. The pandemic had a disproportionate impact on our members some of whom were medically vulnerable, others no longer able to work in zero hour contract jobs and with children. Many of Akwaaba's members live in precarious accommodation or are without a place to stay and they were particularly vulnerable



During the first lockdown, Princess May closed and was no longer able to host Akwaaba. We moved to St Paul's Church who graciously opened their kitchen and hall to Akwaaba after Church services were suspended. As we were no longer able to run Sunday sessions as usual and the needs of members had changed due to the pandemic we dramatically altered and expanded our provision to meet those needs (see Part 2: Achievement and Performance). Later in the year we moved the base for our activities to The Castle Climbing Centre and then to St Mary's Community Garden.

2. If a quarantine or a lockdown is announced...
...where will you stay? <i>Don't Know</i>
What kind of support will you need (we may not be able to provide any help)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provision of daily food (hot food, takeaway food, sandwiches)</li> <li>● Visits</li> <li>● Provisions of canned food and groceries</li> <li>● Provision of safe warm place to stay/sleep overnight</li> </ul>

All the decisions made and the activities delivered were set up by members and volunteers without distinction. It would not have been possible to have achieved the significant increase and change in our response to the pandemic without our members active participation and leadership.



## PART 2: ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

### Food Provision

- Almost every Sunday from 15 March 2020, freshly prepared, cooked and served hot takeaway meals (including a Christmas dinner with dessert and non-alcoholic mulled wine in mid-December) to an average of 200 people, most of them street homeless
- From March to October 2020, sourced food from local businesses, food redistribution organisations (including the Felix Project), local mutual aid groups and fresh donations from Growing Communities for our hot takeaway meals and food parcels.
- From October 2020, we continued to receive food donations for preparing Sunday meals from local businesses and Growing Communities for our takeaway sessions.
- Packaged donations and purchased supplies into an average of 65 food parcels per week,



hand delivered by our team of errand runners each Sunday across the whole of London

- From November 2020 transitioned to providing supermarket vouchers of between £20 and £35 (depending on member situation and household size) to an average of 75 households each month

- Advised and advocated around free school meals





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eligibility and applications for Akwaaba families

## Community Connection

- Members stayed in touch through our Members and Parents WhatsApp groups, where people share articles, memes, their art, personal news, photos from their daily lives etc.
- Published the first ever issue of the Akwaaba magazine, digitally for our members at home and with a print run of 200 in English and 200 in Polish for distribution with our Sunday takeaway meals. Entirely made up of submissions from Akwaaba members, it included recipes, interviews, poetry, art, competitions, poems, and a kids' corner. The next issue is out soon!



- Paired up 17 members through our buddy scheme, whereby buddies kept in touch via calls/texts to provide mutual moral support
- Organised a small number of Zoom socials, including a Christmas special
- Commissioned a facilitation trainer to support parents in setting up a Zoom peer support group

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- Held Zoom meetings open to all Akwaaba members for participatory decision-making when capacity and resource restrictions meant we had to rethink or reduce food parcel and hardship fund provision and decide how best to do this

## Financial Assistance

- Our Migrant Support Fund offers members visiting our Sunday takeaway sessions £5 cash. On average we helped around 100 members each Sunday session.
- Members also receive two bus tickets each Sunday.
- Every 4 weeks, sent a hardship fund payment of £40 initially and £20 from October to 68 families and 93 individual members
- Supported members in crisis who needed emergency help with food, utilities or rent and who have no other source of support (including no state support) by providing 121 emergency grants to members of up to £300 and totalling £25,135. We also provided 171 grants for non-members of between £10 and £40 and totaling £3765.
- Sent £20 utilities grants to 31 members to help with gas/electricity top-up meter costs
- Referred 34 members with no state support or other sources of income to the COVID-19 Red Cross hardship fund for a three-month grant of £360
- Distributed 8 grants of £60 each from the Against Borders for Children Solidarity Fund to families with NRPF, no income from employment and no state support



## Devices and Internet Access

- Sent a £10 phone credit voucher to 175 members every month from April 2020
- Researched the best internet data deals from mobile networks and shared this information and extra funds with families so they could move onto deals with more data

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during the first lockdown; provided vouchers for internet data during the early 2021 lockdown when many were homeschooling

- Distributed 120 smartphones, 50 feature phones and 90 power banks to street homeless members
- Offered tech support, fixing lots of phones, tablets and laptops for members
- Sourced 44 secondhand devices and distributed them to ensure every family has a laptop or tablet
- Started up a laptop lending library with 10 laptops for families to borrow in case they needed access to more than one device

## Children's Project

- Ran Zoom sessions for the kids every Saturday from the end of April, featuring different activities: music, dancing, drawing, painting, origami, scavenger hunts, quizzes, games, cookery, meditation and more.
- Sent a basic craft pack to 65 families, and then after we got a grant from Dissenters Arts N16, sent fancy craft packs to each family with primary school children and ordered individual arts/crafts supplies, from knitting stuff, to paints, pottery and hair dolls, for 19 older children.
- Started an Instagram account to show off the kids' crafty creations
- Sent the children cards on their birthdays and made referrals to Free Cakes For Kids
- Hand printed "Akwaaba Baby" baby grows to welcome each newborn (12 in a year!)
- Wrapped and hand delivered over 125 Christmas presents and 50 gift tokens to the kids
- Sent a book to each child and a Bookstart pack to each of the under 5s
- Bought £50 of equipment/books/toys to support the wellbeing and educational development of each child with autism/SEN





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- Put together a list of online resources for kids to share with parents in search of recommendations
- Printed homework for children during school closures
- Delivered footballs donated by Alive and Kicking to 30 families
- Distributed knitting packs donated by Knit for Peace to 20 families



## Support, Signposting and Errand Running

- Matched 120 individual Akwaaba members with a volunteer who calls on an ad hoc basis, providing emotional and practical support where possible, linking the member up with Akwaaba support, as well as referring and signposting to other organisations for specialist services like counselling, legal aid, food banks etc.
- Matched 71 Akwaaba families with a volunteer who calls fortnightly, providing emotional and practical support where possible, linking the families up with support from Akwaaba and other sources, and helping out where they can with research, advocacy, signposting and referrals
- Offered up to six online/telephone counselling sessions to members with our English and Polish-speaking counselling volunteer



- Maintained a spreadsheet of relevant services (e.g. hot meals, food banks, housing advice, immigration advice, financial assistance, casework etc.) for signposting members to, including by printing and distributing flyers

- Signed up 120 errand runners who ran errands for members, e.g. doing grocery shopping for those shielding/self-isolating, delivering items from Akwaaba, helping out with moving flats etc.

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## **Activities, training and English language learning**

- Our yoga volunteer taught simple yoga and meditation classes for all abilities every Saturday afternoon on Zoom
- The Storytelling Group met every Sunday afternoon on Zoom to read from a book (which we have mailed to participants), discuss it and then sometimes do their own creative writing
- We invited Resist & Renew to run an online facilitation training for our members
- Organised a first aid training session to be delivered online by the Red Cross and open to any interested members
- Ran two member-led Safer Spaces skillshares
- Ran individual English language tuition by video or phone for 23 members and referred many more to local English language schools. We also began a lesson-twinning scheme to reduce isolation of students and teachers.
- Ran two English teacher training sessions, and developed a crowd-sourced bank of resources to support our teachers

## **EEA Advice Project (in partnership with the Public Interest Law Centre)**

- Helped 20 people with their housing situation: 19 rough sleeping members referred to emergency Covid-19 accommodation in hotels and hostels (16 of them successfully, 3 unsuccessfully), one vulnerable person referred to a housing solicitor and moved from inappropriate temporary housing to lifelong accommodation
- During the first phase of emergency accommodation, we repeatedly raised the issue of inadequate food provision and supported 10 members with this by putting them in touch with local mutual aid groups, challenging local authorities or both
- Provided advice and support around welfare benefits for 15 members
- Successfully applied for 9 VRF Emergency Fund grants for members for costs of rent, basic needs or to overcome barriers to support
- Supported around a dozen members in arranging appointments for passports with the embassy and helped cover the costs, or found organisations who could, for at least 6 members
- Helped with access to healthcare (e.g. help liaising with GPs, accompanying to GP visits and hospital visits) for at least 6 members (two of those members passed away in 2020)



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- Provided immigration advice for EEA nationals around the EU Settlement Scheme for about 40 people

## **Political Education**

- We launched a series of monthly online events, Akwaaba Learn & Discuss. This is a space for learning and discussion, for everyone in Akwaaba, around the UK border regime and hostile environment, their relationship to racial capitalism, colonialism and white supremacy, and how we might fight back. So far we have had sessions on:
  - The relationship between racism and immigration controls, with guest speaker Luke de Noronha
  - The relationship between immigration law and colonialism, with guest speaker Nadine El-Enany
  - The history of NHS charges for migrants and how these charges were resisted, with guest speaker Kathryn Medien
  - Housing rights for migrants and the history of racism in housing, with guest speakers from Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth

## **Fundraising**

- Secured a total of £175,000 from 12 grants of between £400 and £52,000
- Raised almost £30k through a crowdfunder set up during the first lockdown and almost £2.5k from our Christmas dinner crowdfunder, and are now working towards a £40k target for our new crowdfunder
- Received over £15,000 from direct donations

## **Volunteers**

- Recruited over 30 new volunteers, many of whom were existing migrant members of Akwaaba
- In addition to lots of smaller inter- and intra-team meetings, organised two volunteer days where volunteers from across all the Akwaaba teams met in a combined outdoor in-person and online Zoom meeting to reflect on and help improve our pandemic response, with over 30 attending in July and over 50 in November

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- Provided child care reimbursements to enable Akwaaba parents to volunteer for Akwaaba's takeaway food sessions on Sunday
- Supported migrant members to become volunteers in different ways. For example, provided help with filling in the volunteer application forms at our Sunday sessions and remotely; covered travel expenses for Sunday sessions for all volunteers who needed it; and contributed towards phone and internet costs and provided access to laptops and tech support for remote volunteering.





## **PART 3: GOVERNANCE OF AKWAABA**

The Board of Trustees continued to meet quarterly to monitor and oversee the activities of these working groups while individual trustees participated in other working groups. Two new trustees were recruited during the year through an open application and interview process.

During this time of dramatic change in need within our community, Akwaaba was able to harness the organisational improvements to decentralise the project which were made over the previous years. 2020-2021 was a year in which our working groups came to the fore:

- The Budget Group, which is open to all members to join, met regularly to determine the budget for the coming quarter and authorise changes to funds allocated to different parts of the project.
- The Fundraising Group was instrumental in tripling our income over the year, which allowed us to support our members during the pandemic.
- The increase in income created additional work for the Finance Committee. New members were recruited from within Akwaaba and additional processes were put in place to manage our increased budget.
- The working groups managing our Sunday sessions, children's programme, hardship support, English classes, storytelling and yoga projects worked independently of each other to organise activities remotely or in different locations around Hackney. This allowed the project to operate at a much larger scale than had been previously possible.

Akwaaba's community ethos continues to be its strength, allowing the project to rapidly respond and making dramatic changes according to the needs of our members.





## PART 4: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Akwaaba's income was £243,576 (2019-20 £136,742 over 15 months).

Recurring donations from individuals and a wide range of organisations have enabled our community to sustain a steady income stream. We gratefully thank all those who generously contributed funds. Also those who made such outstanding fundraising efforts. Akwaaba had, in the previous year, readied itself to raise funds towards its Covid-19 response.

Net assets at year-end (ie. cash balance) was £109,914 (2019-20 £71,780), of which £71,762 (2019-20 £31,555 was unrestricted funds and £38,152 (2019-20 £40,225) restricted funds. A very high proportion of the income received was for the Covid response fund.

The remainder of the income has been applied to the running of Sunday sessions, and travel costs for members to attend Akwaaba events and meetings. Overheads were mainly for hiring of space at Princess May Primary School.

A reserve of £15,000 was maintained to safeguard the ability to continue running sessions. This provides for approximately six months of normal sessions. Any restricted fund balances that cover operational costs are taken into consideration when calculating the required unrestricted reserve.

The main financial risk is the loss of income from recurring donations/grants over a sustained period of time, particularly during the global pandemic which is seeing household and organisational incomes heavily impacted. During uncertain times, Akwaaba is committed to making plans based on existing and confirmed funds only, protecting its reserves and monitoring funds to avoid a deficit position.



## PART 5: ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

<b>Charity name</b>	Akwaaba
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1181291
<b>Charity's principal address at 31-03-2021*</b>  *Subsequently changed	35c Glenarm Road London E5 0LY

### Names of Trustees at 31-03-2021

1. Omolola Alimi
2. Khalid Bashar
3. Toyosi Balogun
4. Michael Boyle
5. Tomasz Muszynski
6. Premila Sattianayagam
7. Shanthi Sivakumaran
8. Maria Stephens

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

This is to confirm that the Trustees have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit set out on their website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-benefit-rules-for-charities>.

**S.Sivakumaran (Trustee)**

**28.01.2022**



## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF AKWAABA (CHARITY NUMBER: 1181291)**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of AKWAABA Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the period ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 15 to 18.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. K. Shah", with a horizontal line underneath.

Kalpesh Shah FCCA  
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants  
5 Dacre Road  
Croydon  
Surrey  
CR0 3DL

Dated: 29 January 2022





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

AKWAABA

1181291

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

Period start date

01 April 2020

To

Period end date

31 March 2021

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donation Income	44,351	87,371	-	131,722	102,761
Grant Income		111,854	-	111,854	31,660
Fundraising Income	-	-	-	-	2,321
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>44,351</b>	<b>199,225</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>243,576</b>	<b>136,742</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>44,351</b>	<b>199,225</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>243,576</b>	<b>136,742</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Cost of Fundraising	-	-	-	-	104
Sunday Session Costs	3,039	3,187	-	6,226	
Sunday Kitchen	1,340	10,875	-	12,215	10,264
Sunday Children Activities	14	4,926	-	4,940	3,033
Childcare Costs				-	1,444
Support Groups/Meetings					
Travel	6,362	5,362	-	11,724	17,827
Member Training	-	-	-	-	1,149
Citizenship Support	-	1,012	-	1,012	3,090
DBS Checks				-	1,708
Covid-19 Response	-	158,373	-	158,373	3,670
Hardship Support (Covid-19)	-	7,500	-	7,500	287
Overheads	-	3,451	-	3,451	20,959
Governance		-		-	793
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>10,755</b>	<b>194,687</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>205,442</b>	<b>64,328</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	430
	-	-	-	-	204
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>634</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>10,755</b>	<b>194,687</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>205,442</b>	<b>64,962</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>33,596</b>	<b>4,538</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,134</b>	<b>71,780</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>38,166</b>	<b>33,614</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>71,780</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>71,762</b>	<b>38,152</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>109,914</b>	<b>71,780</b>



## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	<b>Bank</b>	64,230	38,152	-
	<b>Petty Cash</b>	594		-
	<b>Paypal Account</b>	6,938		-
	<b>Total cash funds</b> (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	71,762	38,152	-
		OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		S. Sivakumaran	28.01.2022	



## **Section C Accounting Policies and notes to the Receipts and Payments Accounts**

### **1. Company Information**

Akwaaba is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Charity Commission: 1181291). The registered address is 35C Glenarm Road, London, E5 0LY.

### **2. Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements**

Charities registered in England and Wales that are not companies are allowed under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Charities Act') to prepare receipts and payments accounts, provided the charity's gross income is less than £250,000.

Receipts and payments accounts have been chosen by the Trustees, since Akwaaba is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and complies with the above for its accounting periods to 31st March 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The accounts have been prepared, using the Charity Commission's pro forma accounts (CC16a), and have been signed-off as ready for an independent examination.

The following have been prepared by the trustees:

- A Trustees' Annual Report
- A Receipts and Payments Account
- A Statement of Assets and Liabilities

### **3. Fund Accounting**

Unrestricted income funds represent those resources which may be used towards meeting any of the objectives of the CIO at the discretion of the membership.

Restricted income funds are resources which are to be applied to specific purposes as requested by the funder, in line with designated giving.

### **4. Incoming Resources**

All incoming financial resources are included in the Income & Expenditure Account upon receipt of monies into the Akwaaba bank account, cash-in-hand records or PayPal. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance sheet.

All volunteer time (ie. free time) is considered an in-kind donation which is not recorded/accounted for.

Akwaaba categorises its income into three main categories:

- *Donation Income:* Any gift of cash from an individual or organisation to support Akwaaba's self-determined goals, for which the funder receives nothing in return (including any funding generated through a social fundraising platform such as Givey.com). The funder can normally receive tax relief directly from HMRC for their donations. Akwaaba is also positioned to claim gift aid on donations from individuals.
- *Grant Income:* Any funding bid that has resulted in non-repayable funds being awarded to Akwaaba. These funds are mainly provided towards a specific purpose and are therefore (generally) accounted for as restricted income.





- *Fundraising Income:* Any funding received through a fundraising event/initiative planned by Akwaaba members.

## **5. Resources Expended**

All expenditure is recognised at the point at which payment is made. Expenditure is classified and aggregated under specific categories, as per their nature (eg. travel costs for members, childcare costs for members, kitchen costs). All costs are directly attributed to categories.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

## **6. Cash at Bank and in Hand**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash held in a current account, in a Paypal account and cash in hand which is split into 'travel' and 'general'.

## **7. Going Concern**

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the CIO to continue as a going concern. These accounts are prepared on the Going Concern concept.

## **8. Reserves**

A reserve of £15,000 is maintained to safeguard the ability to continue running sessions, in the event that fundraising levels drop below weekly expenditures for a significant length of time. £15,000 provides for approximately six months of normal sessions. Any restricted fund balances that cover operational costs are taken into consideration when calculating the required unrestricted reserve.

## **9. Tangible Fixed Assets**

The full acquisition cost of tangible property below £500 will be fully expensed at the point of purchase. Assets may be capitalised if they have a useful life exceeding one year and a per unit acquisition cost exceeding £500. Capital assets capitalised will be depreciated over their estimated useful economic life.

Any property capitalised by Akwaaba, for its own use, will be disclosed in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

## **10. Taxation**

Akwaaba uses its income for charitable purposes and is therefore exempt from Corporation tax. No VAT exemptions have been sought as there is no trading.

## **11. Trustee Expenses/Related Parties**

There are expenses which represent reimbursement of legitimate payments made by trustees personally, in order to carry out their duties as trustee (eg. travel expense).

There are trustees who are also members of the migrant community and are eligible for cash payments, as part of Akwaaba activities (eg. funds to cover travel expenses or childcare to attend sessions/meetings/trainings).